



**AMS Council - September 16th 2020**  
Executive Updates

**Office of the Vice President External Affairs**

Public transportation, housing advocacy, equity-based grants research and sexual violence prevention have been a few of the many things occupying the past few weeks of the Office of the Vice President External Affairs.

As you are probably already aware, the U-Pass has been reinstated for the fall as a result of a decision made by UBC, the AMS, Translink and numerous other post-secondary institutions and student associations in the Lower Mainland. Despite classes being online, many students rely on public transportation to access essential needs and services such as visiting the doctor, going to work and/or buying groceries. We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed financial burdens on students and that some students may be facing financial hardship. As a result, we have our annual Winter 2020-2021 subsidy up and functioning for students who are facing financial hardship throughout these unprecedented times. We're also aware that amidst the ongoing pandemics, thousands of students are living outside Metro Vancouver and have no access to Translink services, which is why we set up an Exemption Form on the AMS website which allows these students to submit an application to be exempted from the fee. Similarly, immunocompromised students and students who meet the regular exemption criteria of the U-Pass are able to opt-out by applying through their SSC (Student Service Centers (SSC) > Finance > U-Pass Exemption).

Equity-based grants are another exciting project that the team has been very busy working on. In collaboration with SEEDS, we will be working on researching the foundation and feasibility of these grants. As of September 10th we have one researcher from SEEDS dedicated to this project, with a few more expected to sign up



in the upcoming weeks.

Housing advocacy is underway as usual, in collaboration with the VP Academic and University Affairs, UBC Student Housing and Hospitality Services and a new partner - Montreal-based UTILE. We just began conversations with UTILE regarding housing advocacy on a Federal level, co-op housing projects and how we can work together to make student housing more affordable, accessible and sustainable while respecting and protecting the rights of renters.

UCRU is still working on finalizing the bylaws. All members of UCRU will be submitting their edits to the bylaws next week and as the chair of the Governance Committee I will be editing it alongside the External Affairs team and the chair of UCRU. Mackenzie Metcalfe, UCRU Chair will be stopping by one of our future UCRU meetings to introduce themselves as well as to have a discussion with councillors on the future of the organization.

We spoke to David Eby, the Attorney General and MLA for Vancouver-Point Grey regarding our overall goals and shared our August submission with our recommendations. Similarly, we will be sharing our recommendations on a broad range of topics and issues to other government officials and offices, such as the Ministry of Advanced Education.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Cheers,

**Kalith Nanayakkara**

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